

Message Text

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ORIGIN COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 EB-08 FRB-03

INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 /064 R

DRAFTED BY COM/OED/MEPD/JPHILBRICK/LW

APPROVED BY EB/OCA/CD:EMSACCHET

COM/OED/MEPD/LENGLESON

COM/OED/MEPD/SMCONGER, DIRECTOR

STATE/AF/W/BKIRKPATRICK (PHONE)

COM/OIM/PMICHELINI (INFO)

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P 021356Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TA BENC, IV

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL
ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT

1. MAJOR EXPORT PROJECTS DIVISION USDOC WAS VISITED BY THE WASHINGTON ATTORNEY FOR FISCHBACH AND MOORE INTERNATIONAL (FMIC), MR. FRITZ KORTH. MR. KORTH IS SEEKING COMMERCE AND STATE ASSISTANCE FOR HIS FIRM'S JOINT VENTURE WITH INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING COMPANY (IECO) TO CONSTRUCT FIVE ELECTRIFICATION NETWORKS CONNECTING 112 VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS AN ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT FOR INDUSTRY.

2. MR. KORTH PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND:

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THE OWNER OF THE PROJECT WILL BE THE ENERGIE ELECTRIQUE DE

LA COTE D'IVOIRE (EECI), WHICH IS A CORPORATION FOUNDED IN 1952 TO PRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE ELECTRICAL ENERGY IN THE IVORY COAST. THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE AND THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING SUPERVISE IT. IT IS OWNED 76.6 PERCENT BY THE SOCIETE NATIONALE DE FINANCEMENTS (SONAFI),

A STATE ORGANIZATION. A MINORITY INTEREST OF 4.5 PERCENT

IS OWNED BY L'ELECTRICITE DE FRANCE AND A SMALL AMOUNT BY PRIVATE INTEREST. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IVORY COAST THROUGH SONAFI IS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF THE CORPORATION. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROJECT USING EXCLUSIVE U.S. AND LOCAL SOURCES IS APPROXIMATELY 115 MILLION DOLLARS, OF WHICH 75 MILLION DOLLARS WOULD BE U.S. GOODS AND SERVICES AND 40 MILLION DOLLARS WOULD BE HOST COUNTRY GOODS AND SERVICES. FMIC AND IECO HAVE SECURED A PRELIMINARY COMMITMENT OF ALMOST 50 MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE FINANCING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF PART OF THE PROJECT. THE PC EXPIRES MAY 31, 1978.

3. FMIC WOULD LIKE TO SOLICIT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN ABIDJAN TO SECURE APPOINTMENTS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL WITH THE ENERGIE ELECTRIQUE DE LA COTE D'IVOIRE AND, IF APPROPRIATE, THE SOCIETE NATIONALE DE FINANCEMENTS, THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE. IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF THE EMBASSY WOULD ASCERTAIN THE WILLINGNESS OF KEY OFFICIALS OF THESE ENTITIES TO SEE THE FOLLOWING COMPANY REPS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE IN MAY: BILL FOSTER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, FMIC; FRITZ KORTH, ATTORNEY, FMIC; JIM LE PERE, FINANCE, IECO. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR THE VISIT IS TO ACQUAINT THE AGENCIES WITH THE EXCELLENT QUALIFICATIONS OF THESE TWO FIRMS FOR THIS PROJECT.

4. HOWEVER, EMBASSY SHOULD KNOW THAT WHAT FIRMS INTEND TO PROPOSE IS THAT THE EECI NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT DIRECTLY

WITH FMIC AND IECO RATHER THAN GO TO PUBLIC TENDER. REQUEST EMBASSY KEEP THIS INFORMATION QUIET AND PROCEED TO CHECK MERELY ON AVAILABILITY OF THESE OFFICIALS FOR

APPOINTMENTS TO DISCUSS GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS OF FIRMS AND THE PROJECT ITSELF.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY RESPONSE BY MAY FIVE. URGENCY IS DUE TO EXPIRATION OF PC END OF MAY. IF EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO TALK WITH OFFICIALS OF ALL

AGENCIES BY THEN, FMIC INDICATES IT WOULD BE WILLING TO

MAKE TRIP EVEN IF THE ONLY RESPONSIVE AGENCY HAS BEEN EECI. IF THERE IS DIFFICULTY GETTING ANY RESPONSE AT ALL

WITHIN THIS SHORT PERIOD, WOULD APPRECIATE AN INTERIM

RESPONSE TO THAT EFFECT. EMBASSY ASSISTANCE MOST
APPRECIATED. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE111145
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: OED/MEPD/JPHILBRICK/LW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780186-1148
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805101/aaaadiqw.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cc2cd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN COME
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2516582
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR PROJECT: CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
TAGS: BENC, IV
To: ABIDJAN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cc2cd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014